PERSISTENT AMERICAN WHO TOOK "MOVIES" OF THE POPE



Cardinal Gibbons as he appears in the movies.

Diplomacy and Finesse of James Slevin Finally Won After Many Others Had Met Firm Refusal

By CLEVELAND MOFFETT.

ARLY in February, 1913, James Slevin, a young American of adventurous and enterprising turn, arrived in Europe on the Kronprinzessin Cecilie, bent on a mission that was generally regarded as hopeless. He proposed to get a series of motion pictures of the Pope and a series of motion pictures showing the intimate life of the Vatican.

Many had tried to take these pic-tures, and all had failed. Large sums had been offered and every influence employed to obtain the Holy Father's consent, but the reply had invariably been unfavorable. In one instance the president of an important motion picture concern, himself a Catholic, had been excommunicated through overzeal and importunity in this direction. Nevertheless, Slevin was confident that he could succeed.

Who was Slevin? A handsome, strapping fellow from California, rather a rolling stone, but full of resourcefulness, who for several years had been a writer of thrilling melodramas and motion picture scenarios and had finally become the manager of a motion picture company. But he had tired of this, he wanted to do something bigger, and the biggest thing he could think of was the Pope in motion pictures. To this idea Slevin was the more drawn because as a youth in California he had studied at a Jesuit college and while there had

learned to speak Latin. "I had thought of the holy shrine at Mecca," he said to me, "and shall probably go to Mecca later with a motion picture outfit, but that will require years, to master Arabic and perfect a disguise, so I started with the

Slevin's confidence of success was based on the American notion that it is hard to stop a man, even without money or influence, if he has a big idea and works at it with persistence and intelligence. No one questioned that his idea was big enough, and he had easily secured the backing of a motion picture company for his mission to Rome. He also had letters and introductions to Roman Catholic dignitaries who might assist his purpose.

What the American chiefly relied upon, however, was his abifity to convince the Pope, if he could gain a hearing, that the progress of the world made it right and necessary that the motion picture ordeal. Slevin had a dozen arguments to prove this, but he must be able to present these arguments in person, which involved many difficulties, one being that he did not speak Italian and could not, therefore address the pontiff in his mother

This was an important point, since here was no task for a routine interpreter; here was need of a man able to reason and persuade through his own power. Accordingly Slevin decided to learn Italian, and set about this so diligently that within three months of his arrival in Rome he was able to express himself understandably in the language of the

Now he was in a position where he could talk to the Holy Father. But how was he to make an effective personal appeal?

inherent value of the motion picture itself. The Pope did not real ze the mportance of this new invention, with all of its vast educational possibilithe, for the simple reason that he had never seen a first class motion picture exhibition. This the American had ascertained, the fact being that Pius X. (who, of course, never entered a theatre) had only had a glimpse of some amateur and inferio motion picture entertainments organ-

If he could now be induced to look at the gorgeous film creations, the pageantry of the Durbar, the grandeur of Niagara Falls, the wonders of the Panama Canal, he would, Slevin felt sure, listen willingly to further arguments, being already half convinced by the silent eloquence of the films themselves.

telligence," said Slevin, "to assist me, once he saw with his own eyes what motion pictures really are and understood what they mean to the world large in diffusion of knowledge. As so much depended upon this ex-

hibition the American spared no pains strong as possible. He made a special trip to Venice to get the most effective motion pictures of the pontiff's former and of his old church. St Mark's, and of the Grand Canal and other places in the beautiful city Pius X. had lived so happily for many years. Then Slevin visited Malta and recorded in motion pictures

effort Slevin journeyed to London and, after some negotiations, succeeded in taking a close up motion picture of King George, smiling pleasantly and steps of Buckingham Palace. This would convey to the Pope's mind the thought that if one of the earth's great rulers was thus willing to have his another?

Meantime, through letters and through his personal charm, Slevin had come into the good graces of Cardinal Merry del Val, the Papal Secre-

tary of State.
"There is the most wonderful man great in every way, as a linguist, a diplomat, a priest, an executive. He for mechanics. In one lesson he understood the complicated mechanism of the kinemacolor projecting ma-chine, as well as the method of taking

The Cardinal permitted Slevin to show him privately the films that had been selected with so much care, and was so delighted with the exhibition that he agreed to lay before the Holy Father the matter of a motion picture exhibition in the Vatican a thing that had never taken place and that was, in fact, looked upon as almost sacrilegious. Great then was the general surprise and great was Slevin's joy when his Holiness consented, fixing the afternoon of June 11, 1913, place nothing less than the pontiff's private throne room, opening off from

"movies"

As the important day approached the demand for invitations to this extraordinary entertainment became so great that the situation was embarrassing. Every Cardinal, every Prince, every monsignor in Rome wished to be present, and all the distinguished members of Roman society. The Pope was to have a motion picture showand immediately it became a great social function, so much so that finally, to avoid jealousies, his Holiness decided to issue no invitations. He would see the pictures alone with his Secretary of State and the members of the papal household. Also his two sisters might be present and his

Slevin purposed to make his per sonal appeal during the exhibition, and memorizing it in Italian so that nothing should be left to chance, and, when the afternoon came, everything was ready-the pictures and the man.

ioned pearl setting. After this Cardinal Merry del Val led forward the American, who had been standing apart, and presented him to the Pope. "This is Mr. Slevin, whom your Holiness remembers," said the Car-

"Oh, yes," said Pius X., "I rememher very well." He referred to a previous occasion when the American had been formally presented.

The Californian knelt and kissed

the ring, and then the Pontiff raised kind of you to give this exhibition.' expressed gratitude for the immense honor that had been done him. This was the proudest moment of his life.

the proceedings of the Eucharistic Congress, an important Roman Catholic gathering that the Pope would be glad to have brought visually before

motion picture taken why not

have ever met," said Slevin. "He is a fine musician and he has a genius

Here, indeed, was an innovation! motion picture machine in the heart of the Vatican! The Pope at the

niece, but no other women.

At half past 4 in the great red and gold room of the Vatican a small company was gathered: Cardinal Merry del Val, in red hat and flowing red robes; two Knights Chamberlain of the Sword and Cape, and the whole ody of prelates of the papal house hold, all in full court regalfa. Also the sweet faced sisters of the Pope and the Pope's niece. Also James Slevin. in full evening dress, with a copy of his Italian speech folded in his breast

pocket. Promptly on the hour the doors opened, and the Pope, dressed in white, entered without ceremony, walking before his confessor. His Holines did not seat himself, as on formal occasions, upon the cushions of the carved and gilded throne chair, but moved about simply, while the little company came forward one by one and, kneeling, kissed the great square emerald of his ring, with its old fasn-

Here was Slevin's opportunity and immediately he began his speech. He Like all good Catholics it had been his dearest wish to make a pilgrimage to Rome to see his Holiness and to receive his blessing.



Mr. Slevin with his camera in Rome. Above-Cardinal O'Connell in motion pictures.

Unfortunately, there were hundrely of millions of the Pope's loyal children for whom this long and expensive trip was impossible. In the name of these millions of poor people in distant lands, who otherwise would never have an opportunity to see the Holy Father, Slevin begged permission to use the wonderful art to satisfy the longings of these hungry, plous hearts.

The Pope smiled indulgently, and something warned the American to postpone the remainder of his plea.

"Well, we are ready," said Plus X. and seated himself on a red and gold chair that Slevin bad taken pains to at the right and Slevin a seat at the left of his Holiness.

Next to the Cardinal sat the Pope's confessor, and then came the two sisters of the Pope, dressed simply in black, and the Pope's niece, quite a pretty girl. Just back of the niece sat Slevin's secretary, who leaned forward from time to time and translated into Italian for the ladies the English legends of the pictures before

So they sat with eyes fixed upon the motion picture screen that had been strangely set up facing the papal This screen was framed in red silk draperies from the Vatican stores, the silk being of the same weave as that worn centuries ago by the doges of Venice. At the opposite end of the room stood the projecting machine, placed for greater seemliness in a cabinet painted to match the dark mahogany of the walls.

"I don't mind telling you." said Slevin, "that when I looked around this magnificent room and realized that I was sitting beside the Pope of place in an advantageous position. Rome in a place that was hallowed Cardinal Merry del Val took the seat by the glory of centuries, where kings and emperors had been crowned-well, it rather got my goat." There were ten numbers in the mo-

tion picture entertainment, beginning with moths and butterflies in brilliant colors and ending with forty gorgeous sunsets in Egypt. His Holiness was greatly astonished and delighted at these beautiful effects.

"It is marvellous!" he exclaimed; "it is as natural as if one were looking out of a window.'

When Pius X. saw the pictures of his beloved Venice his face became radiant and he clapped his hands, say-ing, "Bravo! Bravo!" And he was much interested in the scenes at the Durbar, especially the procession of At one moment Slevin asked the

Holy Father if he was tired, but Pope Pius answered him immediately, "No, by no means, I wish to see it all. I am quite comfortable."

So they sat there for two hours while the films flashed by-Niagara Falls, the Eucharistic Congress, flowers growing miraculously from bud to bloom by speed magnification, the anama Canal and im showing the Emperor and Empress of Germany, the King and Queen of England, the Prince of Wales and many others among the notable per-

When the entertainment was over the Pope said to Slevin: "We have been greatly pleased and entertained. You are a fine type of American.' Then he smiled sweetly and added: "Of course we are a very good audience, because we never saw anything so extraordinary before.

Cardinal Farley escorted to his titular church by a friar.

Staging a Motion Picture Show in the Vatican With the Holy Father and Cardinals as Spectators

Again Slevin seized his opportunity and, continuing his appeal, he spoke of the two hundred and fifty million Catholics scattered over the earth whose hearts would be cheered, whose zeal would be quickened, if they could see the Holy Father moving before them as in life. Motion pictures from the Vatican would appeal to the faithful in all lands and in all tongues as wonderfully as the Miracle of the

The Pope smiled mysteriously as before, and again the American paused. A subtle instinct told him to avoid a definite refusal. Once more they all knelt and kissed the fisherman's ring on the pontiff's white hand, and then the Holy Father with-

The entertainment had been a great success; but Slevin knew in his heart that Pius X. would not consent to the motion picture plan.

It was a serious situation. The American had spent months in Rome under heavy expense and the people n New York were growing impa-They had cabled that Slevin must get a definite answer. "Yes" or "No." And he had cabled back: "If want 'No' for answer you can get it immediately. If you want 'Yes' you must wait and get it my

The Roman Catholic Church was not to be hurried. It was this that saved Slevin, his stubborn unwilling-ness to be placed in a position where he could be definitely refused. To be refused was to fail, and he must get those motion pictures. He never allowed himself to doubt that he ultimately would get them.

Difficulties multiplied however fore the confident promoter. Within a fortnight it was made clear to him. by courteous indirection, that his effort was hopeless. The papal authorities were most friendly, they appreciated his services, and proved it the day following the exhibition, when a delegation from the Vatican waited upon Slevin and presented him with a blue and gold certificate of knightgood, "bene merenti," together with a gold decoration bearing the Pope's image.

But nothing was said about the motion picture privilege and the American wisely said nothing. He was not in a hurry. He was enjoying himself in Rome and was glad to give pleasure to others. He was interested art, in pictures, in life.

He talked charmingly at luncheons. He was apparently a person of princely leisure who loved to enter-tain his friends. Back of his serenity was the haunting consciousness of trouble brewing at the base of sup-

There followed months of waiting and of fruitless effort, during which Slevin was obliged to return to New York and make new arrangements in fact, to organize a new company, tagious his enthusiasm that a day came, early in 1914, when Slevin walked out of an office in Wall street with \$25,000 to his credit and the of incorporation of the Sacred and Historic Film Society, signed and sealed, in his pocket. And March, 1914, found him back in Rome in his spaclous apartments on the Pincian hill near the Villa Borghese, whence he looked forth morning and night upon the grandeur of St. Peter's. He proposed to get those motion pictures of

the Pope. Meantime the news had spread among other companies that Pius X. was interested in motion pictures. Slevin's exploit had made a great sensation. It was realized that here was a prize worth millions ready for some Films of the Vatican! Films of the Holy Father! All the big motion picture concerns in Europe and America were stirred to action and when Slevin arrived in Rome he found five powerful rivals already stetablished there, each pulling frantic wires and making strenuous efforts to gain favor with the Pope. The situation was more difficult than it was before.

Slevin had one great advantage, however, over other aspirants-he knew the vanity of slapdash business methods in this venerable court, and he sat him down to wait patiently and good naturedly while his rivals hustled. He watched them make their moves, force their campaigns and finally come to the point of a definite demand for motion pictures. Then, one by one, saddened or angered, he watched them depart from Rome. baffled by the ancient diplomacy, silenced, definitely refused. And still Slevin waited on Pincian hill, asking for nothing.

Weeks passed. The American enterdelightfully. He fortified various friendships. He saw much of Cardinal Merry del Val. But in all his

talks at dinners and social gatherings Slevin sedulously avoided any reference to his motion picture purpose To some sympathetic Archbishop or Monsignor who asked if he was making progress he would shake his head and say, "No, there is nothing to done, the matter has been decided

And he would add quite sine that it seemed a pity the world s be deprived now and in years to of the animated image, the motion ture memory of so great and man as Pius X. What more pa treasure could the Vatican among its relics of departed sain would suggest, than these we living photographs that sele made possible? Would it n been a crime against posterity Catholic Church could have tion pictures of St. Paul and St and had failed to get them?

Such seed for serious the Slevin sowed with delicate pers whenever the occasion offered. this in a resigned, impersonal wa if he were not pleading his own but rather that of humanity, an amiably, unobtrusively and couraged he let the weeks pas-

Finally one day in the early mer of 1914 the American called Cardinal Merry del Val and ann his departure for America. He wait for the approaching co when new cardinals were to then he would say farewell fectionate memories of the And he begged the Cardinal cept a little souvenir which sired to offer to his Holiness.

There is no need of a so said the Cardinal, "you will

antly remembered here." that he wished to spare his future annovance in connecmotion picture exhibitions collected from various motion companies in America a large of the best films that he on all suitable subjects. Ti (they were worth thousand lars) he was presenting can with gratitude for kin onors, together with a very jecting apparatus. The Pe now have his own motion p

tertainments. The Cardinal was much with this generous gift and his enterprising friend that been possible to grant picture privilege to any American expressed himself at this mark of confidence

"I had done all that I c of for the moment," explain "and if my efforts had smiled eagerly-"I supposhave found some other wa

those pictures." But his efforts did not spirit of progress was not nied any longer, and a few a note came saying that if would present himself at door of the Vatican at a with his motion picture a was possible there would ments of a nature that w interest him.

The developments were th allowed to take a motion I Pius X. in an imposing And on subsequent occasigiven similar opportunities other scenes in the Vat motion pictures of his h other ceremonies, and to tine Chapel, motion ple Pope addressing vast and the balcony of the Vat tures of cardinals, arch chair bearers, mace beare ers, chamberlains of the Cape: also the famous S the Palestine Guard, an-Guard, marching and papal court. In short, he to get the pictures that to Rome to get and that

had been able to get. "I don't know exactly about," explained Slevin say that I never had form sion to take those picture went ahead and took the one objected or baid any

"I was never obtrusive an asked for anything, but t to happen in a wonderful would open and processicome along and the Pope pear, just as I had my p chine ready.

"I think they saw that I cere and they felt the for arguments, although they say officially and, summing quer by vielding."

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SCENES

VERY little community in Engorganizations. These vary from societies giving the man at social purity brigades.

TIME

Some of these organizations have been formed by women to assist in recruiting. One of the methods some of them have used was to present a white feather to each young fellow wearing civilian clothes, accompanied with the exhortation that he should strive to prove himself a man. Often they ave got hold of the wrong men; for thousands of apparently fit men have been refused by the military authorities as not coming up to the standard. Partly to protect themselves many men who cannot join the army wear badges, such as "war service," ing they are employed on Govern-

ment work. It has actually been the case that white feathers have been given to men returned from the front on short furlough because they wore private clothes. One man thus presented was a naval officer whose ship had been sunk by a torpedo, and who had lost his uniform. Public opinion in England is strongly against the white feather method applied to men the

army does not want. Many Belgian refugees in England are following King Albert's advice by working instead of relying on the hospitality of English folk; King Albert has told his people that he does not want them to live in idleness, as that would be bad for them. The unmarried Belgians mostly prefer to live in lodgings rather than in the established Belgian guest houses. So organizations have been formed to keep them in the straight and narrow path.

Unofficial daylight saving has come into being, for which many express indebtedness to the Zeppelin. Home Office authorities laid down some precautions which had to be observed in case of aerial invasion. The military commands in various parts of the country added to these. The county authorities made still other additions, and the local police and other bodies completed the work.

The days of partially restricted lighting are gone so far as most cities are concerned. In addition to green lights, the street cars are shrouded in green blinds and the lights are shaded. Nearly all street lamps

are unlighted, street after street being in pitch darkness. In one city a storekeeper was fined because a policeman found that by bending down he could look under the window blind and see a lamp; no light must show on the

footpath. The result is that when the sun sets one must either go home or run the risk of collision in seeking a place of amusement. All vehicles down to the common bicycle must be provided with a red lamp at the back which must not throw much light. People are beginning to go to bed at a very early hour now: in fact England is acquiring new habits, going back to the days of old when the curfew rang at 8 or 9 o'clock to tell the inhabitants that they must extinguish all lights and go

While most workers are benefiting to a remarkable degree as a result of plenty of work at higher wages, some are faced with increased cost of living and smaller remuneration. Among have just taken what to them is an astounding step. When the war began advertisers took fright and newspaper revenue dropped, wages were reduced and men were put on part time. The mechanical workers suffered no wage reductions as they be-

The newspaper men some time ago formed a trade union, the National Union of Journalists; they have be come weary of working at reduced wages, while daily chronicling war bonuses and other increases of wages, so they have put in a demand for themselves. This is, pre-war salaries and a war bonus of 30 per cent. on low salaries to compensate for increased cost of living. To force the increase they are going to try to get the Government to schedule journalism as a war trade, seeing that the authorities control news by the censorship.

One of the events that always cause excitement is the arrival in a town of a batch of war prisoners. When prisoners are expected a crowd gathers along the streets which they must pass from railroad to camp. The officer in charge usually makes some ch speech as this:

"I know why you are all here, but I wish to make a request. Many of you have sons, brothers, husbands fighting at the front. After the bestial excesses of the enemy, one can understand your feelings. But do not

Behave like English ladies and English gentlemen.

Almost invariably there comes a ringing cheer of approval from the crowd of everyday people. As the prisoners emerge from the railroad station, guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets, there is almost complete silence. In one case the women in one case the women in the crowd laughed at the curious pith helmets worn by prisoners from the tropical German colonies, but the only demonstration was when one prisoner stood on the top of a car and shook his fist at the crowd, and that was by Indeed, many in the crowd expressed

compassion. The working girls had a certain amount of chaff for the smiling men. "Where's your Iron Cross?" Willy will send a Zeppelin for you!" "You'll get plenty of good food now!" be better than the trenches, mate-Aye, and better than our poor chaps are getting!" and so on. There is, however, a growing resentment at what is termed the "palatial way" in which the prisoners are treated, especially as English prisoners in Germany are constantly writing home for

Recruiting goes on apace, many men being released from industrial pursuits by economies and by the drafting in of men and women who need not work save to let young workers free. Public services are restricted and amalgamated for the purpose.

One interesting feature of recruiting is the formation of special units such as the "Pals" Battalions. are now 100,000 men serving as "Pals" each battation consisting of men normally engaged in the same work or in the same walk of life. Thus some store clerks, and so on, while big cities form their own battalions of men who are chums in private life. University graduates, clerical workers, miners and others thus are kept together in war as in peace.

The voluntary workers who made it their hobby to found hospitals for wounded soldiers now have their grievance. The War Office has come to the conclusion that the wounded in private establishments were getting more coddling than was good for them and that many ladies were treating them as pets rather than soldiers. So it has been decreed that the Government hospitals must be used in future and these are being established on a vast scale.